

THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR BOURNEMOUTH

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr G Farquhar – Deputy Mayor

Present: Cllr C Adams, Cllr H Allen, Cllr S Armstrong, Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr J Beesley, Cllr S Bull, Cllr P Canavan, Cllr E Connolly, Cllr D d'Orton-Gibson, Cllr D Farr, Cllr J Hanna, Cllr A-M Moriarty, Cllr B Nanovo, Cllr L Northover, Cllr J Richardson, Cllr C Rigby, Cllr J Salmon, Cllr K Salmon, Cllr T Slade and Cllr L Williams

11. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:

The Mayor, Councillor Jackie Edwards;
Councillor Marcus Andrews;
Councillor Phillip Broadhead;
Councillor Olivia Brown;
Councillor Sharon Carr-Brown;
Councillor Richard Burton;
Councillor John Challinor;
Councillor Brian Chick;
Councillor Bobbie Dove;
Councillor Michelle Dower;
Councillor Anne Filer;
Councillor Richard Herrett;
Councillor Alasdair Keddie;
Councillor Jamie Martin;
Councillor Karen Rampton.

12. Declarations of Interests

None.

13. Confirmation of Minutes and matters arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 30 January and 20 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

Voting: Unanimous

14. Charter Mayor's Communications

The Deputy Mayor confirmed that the Mayor had attended 16 engagements since taking office, including an engagement for her chosen charity, the Bournemouth Natural Sciences Society.

The Deputy Mayor went on to update Trustees on his activities since the previous meeting, which also included attendance at a Bournemouth Natural Sciences Society function and deputising for the Mayor at engagements including the Summer Fair at Queens Park Infants Primary School.

15. Report of the Bournemouth Civic Working Group

The Chair of the Civic Working Group (CWG), Councillor Lawrence Williams, presented the report of the CWG.

Councillor Williams confirmed that the CWG had reviewed attendance of Trustees at meetings, with further details set out in agenda item 7.

It was confirmed that due to the absence of the Mayor the matter of Councillor Farquhar's Mayoral portrait would be deferred to the next Charter Trustees meeting.

Trustees were advised that the CWG continued to support the drafting of a Service Level Agreement for the provision of support to the Bournemouth Charter Trustees from BCP Council. In addition, the CWG had provided officers with feedback to the recent Bournemouth Mayor-making event and had instructed officers to update the official Mayoral photographs in the Civic Centre.

The Mayor highlighted that, due to his impending retirement, this was to be the Honorary Clerk's final meeting of the Bournemouth Charter Trustees. Trustees thanked the Honorary Clerk for his many years of support.

16. Audit Report 2024-25

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services introduced the audit report, confirming that there were no matters of high priority identified. Where appropriate the audit team's recommendations had been accepted and actioned.

Regarding R9: Publication Scheme, there would be no publication of asset detail to the public website, as publication could compromise the safety of the assets or anyone holding/wearing them. In addition, it was felt that the recommendation to publicly publish all instances of expenditure over £100 was impractical and too resource-intensive to support.

Regarding R6: Reserves, Trustees sought further detail on the level of reserves and the setting of the precept.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) advised that reserves were high due to an underspend in 2024/25 following receipt of legal advice, the subsequent reduced Charter Trustee remit, and reduced spending on fewer events. The 2025-26 budget had included the use of reserves to support the budget, which in turn had allowed the precept to be frozen.

The precept and budget had been reviewed by the Budget Working Group prior to budget approval by the Charter Trustees in January 2025. Feedback from the Working Group was that the RFO should seek to avoid large increases and decreases of council tax in this and subsequent years.

The RFO confirmed that much of the agreed budget consisted of fixed costs. The hospitality budget was variable as this depended on the number of engagements held by each Mayor throughout their year.

RESOLVED: That Trustees note the internal audit report and the management responses to the recommendations.

Voting: unanimous.

17. Budget Outturn & AGAR Return 2024/25

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) introduced the report, highlighting that Trustees had underspent against their budget by £17,357. The use of reserves to support the budget was £6,288 rather than the budgeted £23,645, giving a total reserve carried forward of £97,289 as at March 2025.

The AGAR, set out in Appendix B, was submitted for Trustees approval and progression to public inspection and audit.

It was recommended that Trustees approve the proposed amendment to the Financial Regulations to increase the £100 threshold for procuring 3 quotes, to allow for greater flexibility and reduce administrative time for officers in line with the audit recommendation.

Trustees sought clarity on why reserves were so high. The RFO elaborated on the answer given in agenda item 6, and referred to a historic underspend due to a lack of engagements held during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The RFO noted that Trustees had no agreed strategy for the use of reserves and suggested that the matter should be referred to the Civic Working Group (CWG) to review. Trustees were encouraged to submit suggestions for the use of reserves in line with the Charter Trustee remit. The Chair of the CWG, Councillor Lawrence Williams, agreed that the matter would be considered at the next CWG meeting.

Trustees queried whether the precept could be removed.

The RFO confirmed that the precept could be removed, but highlighted that to do so could result in a higher impact on resident bills in the following years.

Trustees queried whether reserves could be used to support an event to mark the 30 year anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre. Trustees were advised that such a use fell outside of the Charter Trustees remit.

RESOLVED: that Trustees

- 1. Note the Outturn position for 2024/25 set out in appendix A;**
- 2. Approve Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 found in appendix B; and**
- 3. Approve the change to the financial regulations to allow the requirement for a competitive review to be increased from £100 to £500 on purchases set out in paragraphs 9-10.**

Voting: Unanimous.

18. Trustee attendance at meetings

The Deputy Head of Democratic Services introduced the report, which provided detail on Charter Trustee attendance at meetings and highlighted those Trustees who had not attended two or more consecutive meetings.

RESOLVED: that Trustees

- a) Note the meeting attendance record attached as Appendix 1; and**
- b) Request that the Honorary Clerk write to all Trustees who have not attended the previous two consecutive meetings, asking them to confirm whether they wish to continue as Charter Trustees or whether they wish to be considered for removal**

Voting: For 20, Against 0 (1 abstention.)

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

MAYOR